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SNAPSHOT

Libraries Contribute to School Success

It takes approximately \$1,500 to buy 500 books to start a library, which amounts to an average of a dollar per student



Girls at Fatima Balkhi Girls' High School in Mazar-e-Sharif happily unpacking books received thru USAID funds.

This USAID-funded project is a model of success and its impact, in terms of learning outcomes, is now manifesting in various ways in some provinces.

USAID/Strengthening Education in Afghanistan

Many communities and public schools in Afghanistan do not have a library. Students are limited to grade level books provided by the Ministry of Education.

To improve access to quality education services in Afghanistan, a USAID project has disseminated educational materials to rural communities to improve literacy and promote a culture of reading in Afghanistan. Through the project, about 200 libraries have been established and more than 100,000 books distributed around the country. Each library is initially provided with 500 books that are approved by the Ministry of Education and available in both Dari and Pashto. Positive results are evident throughout Afghanistan.

The principal of Roshan High School in Laghman Province, enthusiastically said, "In the past years, only about 30 to 40 percent of our students passed the university entrance test. But since we had the library, students spent more time studying, and this year, 70 percent passed the test."

In Kapisa Province, the girls at Khumzargar Girls High School are making the most use of their library books. The school won first place in a recent competition organized by the Education Directorate of the province. The teacher who coached the girls believes their success is because they found all the learning materials needed in the library. Most of the students in Khumzargar now realize the value of a library and they have started donating their personal books to the school.

According to the principal of Fatima Balkhi Girls' High School in Balkh Province, environmental pollution and lack of trees and greenery in Mazar-i Sharif, challenged the staff and students to propose solutions in making their school environmentally pleasing. The students found rich materials from books in their library. From their reading, the students decided to make their school clean and green. They planted trees around the school campus and practiced and campaigned for proper waste disposal. Today, the school is one of the nicest and greenest schools in the city.

Distributing educational books have not only made education accessible to more Afghan students, but more importantly, their quality of education and quality of life is improving.